

Light Commission October 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes

To: Light Commission: Commissioners
Light Department: J. Blair, General Manager
From: Matt Harrington
Date: October 28, 2025

A quorum being present, Chair Yarmoff brought the meeting to order at 4:03 pm. The meeting was held in person at MMLD HQ and with remote internet access, both available to public participation. A recording of the meeting is made available to the public at the following [link](#).

Participated in meeting:

Commissioners: Commissioners Frechette, Hull, Harrington, Smith, and Yarmoff participated in person.
Light Department: General Manager, Jon Blair

Comments from the Public

No Public Comments

Marblehead Land Acknowledgment declaration was read by Commissioner Frechette.

Motion by the Secretary to approve minutes

Motion to approve minutes from open meetings dated July 14, July 22, July 28, Sept 9; and executive session minutes from July 22, July 28. Seconded by Frechette.

- **VOTE 2025-28:** Unanimous Approval
*Note by Smith to make sure that attendees know that despite minutes being slow to post video recordings of meetings are usually posted next day.

Chair Yarmoff requested feedback from commissioners on the town charter document that we received after our last meeting. If no feedback is received it will be assumed approved.

General Manager Report and Update by GM Jon Blair (JB):

- First four weeks JB has seen the entirety of the system and met every member of the organization and a handful of residents. Blair indicated that the department is in good shape to make progress over the next few years. Everything that Blair assumed in advance of taking the job has proved true, strong finances, strong team, strong foundation.
- JB would like to set a clear vision with some more structure to measure progress going forward. JB voiced that the department may understand where it is going, but a plan makes it transparent for all stakeholders.
- JB's Safety Spotlight: keep note of daylight savings and short daylight, it is common for traffic accidents to spike, along with weather and leaves. Many streetlight outages reported.
 - Smith added that the Park and Rec department gave thanks to MMLD for providing the use of the digger derrick to help install the new lights at Gatchell's
- Manager Updates (see slides):
 - IN PROGRESS

- **Job Search:** Department is searching for a meter technician to prepare for an impending opening.
- **MASS DEP Compliance-** Received a letter indicating a potential issue with the underground fuel storage tank. In response, department will begin monthly inspections, prepare a rapid improvement plan with the help of a consultant, and set up a long-term plan. DPW was also consulted about how they manage their tanks.
- **Wilkins Plant Testing:** Consultants booked to do a 3yr stack test in December. Coordinating with MMWEC to allow testing in coordination of grid.
- **Village13:** Schedule has slipped a bit. Not a single cause, but lots of small moving pieces that add up to longer delays. Weekly meetings are keeping things on track. On pace to get any digging necessary before the ground freezes.
 - Smith asked about some extra clearing that has been done around the Village 13 site. Yarmoff mentioned that there are some new poles being put in to help complete the project. JB confirmed that the yard is not growing, but some space was needed for additional poles.
 - JJY asked when the final acceptance of the switchgear will take place. JB said that this should take place Late February or early March.
- **Insurance:** Full appraisal of our property being completed, as well as other updates to policy.
- **CEC Grant Contract-** It has been going back and forth, we have fulfilled our obligations, and we are waiting for CEC to sign off and announce. The grant is for the transmission resilience project.
- Long Term
 - **Strategic and Capital planning-** Focus for JB over the next 12+ months. Working with team members to get a pulse on what is needed and seeing what sort of sustainability grants and plans can assist.
 - JB hypothesized what direction our strategic plan be focused
Affordability? Decarbonization? Hyperfocus on reliability and resilience?
 - JB added that this will tie into our vision.
 - **Policy Development-** JB opined that it would be helpful if the board could help enact policies that would allow the department to make decisions without needing individual approvals. A recent example would be the Job Applicant travel policy and Public EV Charging
 - **Projects:**
 - Transmission Resilience- Waiting on CEC approvals
 - Battery Energy Storage (BESS)- Economics are changing substantially at the federal level. Need to explore if the BESS program will work or if it needs to change. Might need to act decisively in the next 8-10 weeks to take advantage of tax credits before the end of the year.
 - Yarmoff mentioned that the economic benefits of going forward could be close to \$1m/yr split between LightShift and MMLD.
 - Distribution System- Lots of work to be done, and the team is prioritizing. They are working with business manager Matt Barrett to plan out capitalization plan utilizing the depreciation fund.
 - Overhead work- Mostly able to do in house

- Underground work- Trenching and other items outsourced
- Yarmoff: Goals for GM
 - Contract for JB requires the board to provide goals for GM for the next 12 months. See Slides for details on what needs to be provided to GM to complete his job satisfactorily, and earn bonuses
 - Chair proposes to adopt the current objectives as guidance for the 6-month period Sept 2025- March 2026. This will allow board and GM to progress through past due goals and develop new goals for the final 6 months of the contract year.
 - See slides for the existing objectives being proposed.
 - Smith mentions that these have been set goals for a few years, and it is good to see that we are making progress.
 - JB seeking clarification of the difference between the objectives and goals outlined.
 - Yarmoff clarifies that the longer list of objectives is a performance guideline to assess overall performance. The 3 bullet shorter list is for bonus assessment.
 - JB understands explanation and agrees.
 - Discussion regarding the need to separate the performance and bonus objectives. All understand the idea to separate them into an “Objective and Key Result- OKR” style framework.
 - Discussion regarding the timing of how the calendar runs for the objectives and performance
 - **Motion by Smith to adopt the GM’s yearly objectives and performance goals seconded by Frechette.**
 - **VOTE 2025-29- Unanimous Yes**
- Yarmoff: MassCEC TDA Program
 - Climate tech testing and demo program from the Mass leads act of 2024
 - Grants from \$1.5-\$5m for shared infrastructure (See slides for full details).
 - Yarmoff on behalf of Innoventure Labs (IVL) of which Yarmoff is a board member) with support of JB submitted an application that was approved.
 - IVL/MMLD proposal:
 - Build pads near our proposed utility scale batteries with interconnections to allow entrepreneurs to test new and innovative batteries.
 - Similar scale project to V13 and if awarded MassCEC would provide a \$4.5m Grant
 - Possible benefits to town:
 - MMLD could receive rental revenue from companies using the testing site
 - Allow a connection during an emergency to plug in a townwide generator through this.
 - Frechette asked if there were any specific types of batteries being proposed.
 - Yarmoff said that it would be up to the market to decide
 - Question from Logan Casey (Town of Marblehead): For this application is there a specific property defined for the battery system.

- Yarmoff responded that Tioga has been the primary focus, but we are still needing to finalize a site. Leaving it somewhat generic in the application is ok and provides flexibility.
- Question from Hull: If the grant is secured is there a penalty for backing out?
 - Yarmoff indicated that there is no penalty for backing out
- Question from Hull: Asked Yarmoff if there was a conflict of interest due to Yarmoff's affiliation with Innoventure Labs.
 - Yarmoff responded that he has no salary or financial interest in any organization involved in this project.
- Smith pondered if there was a need for IVL to work with a utility company for them to test the batteries?
 - Yarmoff mentioned there is appeal for the battery companies to work with real world conditions. To go bring the product to market the potential customers might want to know that it worked in real situation.

Motion by chair to move to Executive session using Exemption 3 to open meeting law to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. The board will not return to open session. Seconded by Frechette.

- Vote: Unanimous Yes

The executive session started at 5:16 pm.

See Next Page for Appendix with referenced documents:



MMLD Board Meeting October 28, 2025



Agenda

4:00 Call to Order

Public Comments

Previous Meetings: Minutes, Town Charter comments

General Manager Report

Goals for the General Manager

Application to MassCEC ClimateTech TDA program

Executive Session: Not to return to Open Session

Adjourn



Agenda

4:00 Call to Order

Public Comments

Previous Meetings: Minutes, Town Charter comments

General Manager Report

Goals for the General Manager

Application to MassCEC ClimateTech TDA program

Executive Session: Not to return to Open Session

Adjourn



Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the following meetings have been distributed:

July 14 Public Meeting

July 22 Public Meeting

July 22 Executive Session

July 28 Public Meeting

July 28 Executive Session

Sept. 9 Public Meeting

Minutes for meetings of 9/16, 9/22 and 9/24 are pending



Agenda

4:00 Call to Order

Public Comments

Previous Meetings: Minutes, Town Charter comments

General Manager Report

Goals for the General Manager

Application to MassCEC ClimateTech TDA program

Executive Session: Not to return to Open Session

Adjourn



Agenda

4:00 Call to Order

Public Comments

Previous Meetings: Minutes, Town Charter comments

General Manager Report

Goals for the General Manager

Application to MassCEC ClimateTech TDA program

Executive Session: Not to return to Open Session

Adjourn



Goals for the General Manager

Per contract General Manager and Board have to agree on:

- Objectives for the full calendar year;
- Performance Goals to determine Performance Bonus.



Yearly Objectives; Performance Goals

- **Section V. General Manager Evaluation.**

B. The Commission and the General Manager shall meet at least annually to define the goals and objectives which they determine necessary for the proper operation of the MMLD and the attainment of the Commission's policy objectives, and shall further establish a general priority among those various goals and objectives, with said goals and objectives to be reduced to writing. Said goals and **objectives shall be established by October 29th of each contractual year** for the following contract year period, and shall generally be attainable within the time limits specified and within the annual operating and capital budgets and appropriations provided by the MMLD and the events that have occurred during the year.

- **Section IV. Salary**

C. At the conclusion of the first and each subsequent year of the contract, the General Manager may also receive, at the Board's discretion, a performance bonus of up to five percent (5%) of his salary in effect at the time which will be based on **performance as measured against agreed upon goals** and the financial condition of MMLD. Said amount will be in addition to any merit increase given as part of the annual review process described in Section B above. Paid bonuses shall be reported as wages for the purposes of taxation and calculation of pension to the extent permitted by law, but will not be added to the General Manager's base salary.



Yearly Objectives Proposal

- Adopt the current objectives as guidance for the period September 2025 – March 2026;
- Request the GM to propose a set of new objectives, by 3/15/2026 for the period April 2026 – September 2026



Objectives (1/3)

A. Human Resources and Safety

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Define chain of command within organization chart; create succession plan | Essential |
| 2. Expand capacity and develop robust sustainability and communications programs | Essential |
| 3. Expand capacity and develop robust engineering department | Essential |
| 4. Continue department safety and training programs | Important |

B. Operations & Infrastructure

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Continue Village 13 Substation capital improvement project | Essential |
| 2. Create 3-year operational work plan for distribution system and engineering capital improvements | Essential |
| 3. Draft a plan to supplement the existing Railyard substation's dual 23kV transmission supply lines and/or to provide temporary emergency supply | Important |



Objectives (2/3)

C. Ensure Financial Stability & Competitive Rates

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Continue new rate structure design and develop implementation timeline | Essential |
| 2. Draft demand management plan with targets to materially reduce consumption during high consumption hours, including likely peak | Essential |
| 3. Identify and apply to relevant grant programs | Essential |
| 4. Prepare three-year Capital investment plan aligned with Operational upgrade plan | Essential |
| 5. Evaluate options and develop a strategic plan to optimize the Wilkins Plant value, that include both economic, system resiliency and carbon emission considerations | Important |



Objectives (3/3)

D. Decarbonize Power Supply

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Develop comprehensive strategic plan for BESS including optimal total storage capacity targets and a methodology to rank preferred potential sites on Town-owned land | Essential |
| 2. Explore options to procure or install additional decarbonized power to reach 70% carbon-free power by 2028 and 85% by 2033 | Important |

E. Communicate with Stakeholders, Improve Customer Service and Education

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Launch regular communications with customers (bills inserts/email/social media) | Essential |
| 2. Create an integrated communication plan (e-mail/paper newsletter, news media, social media, web site, emergency communications) | Essential |
| 3. Survey customers to establish baseline of customer satisfaction, and assess customer attitudes regarding MMLD and customer-level strategic electrification | Important |
| 4. Participate in relevant Town initiatives that unlock Federal and State funding | Important |



Yearly Performance Goals Proposal

- Define chain of command within organization chart; create succession plan with clear responsibilities
 - Create 3-year capital investment plan for distribution and engineering systems improvements
 - Complete Village 13 Substation Upgrade
-



Proposal to adopt Objectives and Goals

- Motion to adopt the described General Manager's
 - Yearly Objectives and
 - Performance Goals
-



Agenda

4:00 Call to Order

Public Comments

Previous Meetings: Minutes, Town Charter comments

General Manager Report

Goals for the General Manager

Application to MassCEC ClimateTech TDA program

Executive Session: Not to return to Open Session

Adjourn



MassCEC's TDA Program

MassCEC launched ClimateTech Testing and Demonstration Program under the Mass Leads Act of 2024

- Open to Entrepreneur Support Organizations (ESOs)
- **Grants of between \$1.5M to \$5M for Shared Infrastructure**
 - Infrastructure must be available for at least 10 years
 - Capital projects must be completed within 3 years of grant (before 4/29)
 - Partners must share 20% of cash expenditures



TDA Program

Two phase competition

- RFP release 22 July 2025
- Concept Papers due 14 September 2025
- Invitation to apply 14 October 2025
- Full Application 14 November 2025

IVL sent a concept paper with MMLD, and has been invited to apply. Concept paper was very well received by reviewers.



IVL – MMLD proposal

- Build several pads next to Utility Scale Battery
 - Allowing to connect and test innovative batteries
 - Total project: estimated at \$5.5M
of which MassCEC's share: \$4.5M
 - Discussions this week to decide whether to file full application
-



Agenda

4:00 Call to Order

Public Comments

Previous Meetings: Minutes, Town Charter comments

General Manager Report

Goals for the General Manager

Application to MassCEC ClimateTech TDA program

Executive Session. Exemption 3 to Open Meeting Law, to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Not to return to Open Session.

General Manager Update

Board of Electric Commissioners Meeting
October 28, 2025



MMLD

Safety Minute



- + **Daylight Savings: November 2, 2025**
- + **Shortest Daylight: December 21, 2025**
- + **Hazards**
 - Rain
 - Leaves
 - Wind
 - Holiday decorations
- + **Report a streetlight outage:**
 - 781-631-5600
 - marbleheadelectric.com/streetlight-outage-report



Marblehead Municipal Light Department

2

Manager Updates

- + **Meter Technician**
- + **MassDEP compliance**
- + **Wilkins testing**
- + **Village 13 substation**
- + **Insurance update**
- + **CEC grant contract**

- + **Strategic and capital planning**
- + **Policy development**
- + **Projects**
 - DOE/MassCEC Transmission Resilience
 - Battery Energy Storage System
 - Distribution System
 - Overhead
 - Underground



Marblehead Municipal Light Department

3

Thank you

Contact Info:

jblair@mhdld.com

(781) 584-5472



Marblehead Municipal Light Department

4